

Congressman Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. today announced the repeal of the so-called "Weller Amendment," a provision designed to sabotage efforts to build the Abraham Lincoln National Airport. Jackson included language striking the Weller Amendment in the National Defense Authorization Act, which now moves to the president's desk.

Jackson said, "The Weller Amendment violated process, precedent and the U.S. Constitution. It was a reactionary, retrograde and rotten provision, concocted by airport opponents to sabotage the airport project. It was designed as a roadblock, but now it is road kill -- and I pronounce it dead and disposed of!"

Named for its sponsor Congressman Jerry Weller, the Weller Amendment was surreptitiously slipped into the 2006 Defense Authorization Bill (P.L. 109-183) during the House-Senate conference. In clear violation of the Tenth Amendment, the measure required the Federal Aviation Administration to impose a federal residency requirement on a local airport authority, an improper and impermissible intrusion into state sovereignty. The Weller Amendment also required the airport project to comply with federal procurement guidelines, even though Illinois has a comprehensive government procurement code -- yet another unconstitutional intrusion by the federal government.

"After the Weller Amendment passed, the Weller faction in Will County called a press conference at which they held a steering wheel claiming to be in the driver's seat. But, for two years, they've just kept their feet on the brakes. They've failed to come up with a concrete, viable proposal. They've failed to search for or secure funding. They've failed to draft their own technical layout plan. They've failed to do anything, but honk their horns and blow

more smoke."

Jackson continued, "The facts are clear. While the Weller faction will skirt the law to stop the airport, the Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC) will go the extra mile to build it. ALNAC has developed the only viable, comprehensive plan to construct the airport through an innovative public-private partnership. Under a cost-effective, market-driven, privately-financed approach, the airport would be built by world-class private developers at no cost to taxpayers."

"With the repeal of the Weller Amendment, ALNAC is reclaiming the wheel and moving forward. To shift the project into high gear, Governor Blagojevich should direct state officials to submit ALNAC's most recent layout plan to the FAA and to continue buying land for the airport. As our local governments struggle with budget shortfalls, a housing crisis and a looming recession, now is the time to commit to the Abraham Lincoln National Airport -- and the millions of dollars in private investment and the 15,000 jobs it will bring," Jackson concluded.